

# CENTRAL WATERFRONT STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

## MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting #8

March 29, 2012

### MEETING INFORMATION

Meeting #8, March 29, 2012

5:15 – 7:15 p.m.

Seattle Labor Temple, Hall #1

### ATTENDANCE

#### Stakeholders

- Brett Allen
- Don Benson
- Dave Blandford
- Bob Donegan
- Craig Hanway
- Kirk Hovenkotter (for David Ramsay)
- Susan Jones
- Charles Knutson
- John Odland
- Vince O'Halloran
- Katherine Olson
- Vlad Oustimovitch
- Nicole McIntosh
- Geri Poor
- Theresa Schneider
- Tom Tanner

#### Staff

- Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Marshall Foster, Department of Planning and Development
- Jennifer Wieland, SDOT
- Steve Pearce, SDOT
- Erin Taylor, EnviroIssues

Approximately fifteen members of the public were in attendance.

### WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation Assistant Director for Strategic Projects, welcomed the group to the eighth Central Waterfront Stakeholders Group meeting, and asked for introductions. Bob reviewed the meeting objectives:

- Update on Elliott Bay Seawall Project schedule
- Update on Waterfront Seattle design progress
- Review Waterfront Program sequencing
- Review other waterfront construction projects

Erin Taylor noted that the minutes from the seventh Central Waterfront Stakeholders Group meeting would be distributed with minutes from meeting #8, with the goal of getting both out in the next week. Bob noted that his title has changed to Assistant Director for Strategic Projects.

Advising on Waterfront Seattle and the Elliott Bay Seawall Project



## WATERFRONT SEATTLE UPDATE

Marshall Foster, Planning Director for the Department of Planning and Development, updated the group on Waterfront Seattle's recent work including feedback from the community forums, design work on the Tidelines Promenade, and design work on the Overlook Connector (also called "Overlook Fold").

The recent series of five Waterfront Seattle community forums were successful. They attracted a diverse audience. Based on sign-ins, roughly 45 percent of attendees were new to a Waterfront Seattle event. Many attendees used the forums as an opportunity to clarify key ideas presented by the design team. Key themes from attendees included:

- Interest in strong pedestrian connections to the water;
- Access for all levels of mobility;
- Connections for north/south travel;
- Desire to create spaces for multiple uses;
- Maintaining the working waterfront look and feel through art; and
- Integration of improved habitat and stormwater management.

Marshall clarified that the Tidelines Promenade is all of north/south public space and/or "sidewalk area" west of the Alaskan Way roadway. Marshall discussed the design team's interest in using "tidelines" as a tool to tell the story of the shoreline's evolution, as well as the daily movement of the tides. He described the elements that the team is using to develop this concept:

- "Floor" concepts are made up of a simple palette of materials, potentially incorporating historic wood or wood elements from the waterfront. The design of the promenade at an intersection with a pier slip incorporates a hardscape walkway and spillout areas which are oriented around the slips, including extensive landscaping, and seating areas.
- Street crossings will carry the look and feel of the promenade across the street with pedestrian connections, smooth and predictable north/south movement, and traffic calming methods for bicycle traffic. The designs would send a strong message that multiple modes of transportation must interact in these areas.
- There would be several seating options; a few examples were provided that will be fully developed later in design.
- "Get downs" are methods to access the water; similarly, these will be fully developed later in design.
- The canopy, that is, the tree/landscape element, would distinguish different zones of the promenade and would include view breaks.

Marshall explained that the Overlook Connector is envisioned to connect two elements that are the "soul" of Seattle: the Pike Place Market and Seattle Aquarium/waterfront. The goal is for visitors to move gracefully between the market and the waterfront. There is also a challenge: Victor Steinbrueck Park is roughly 100 feet above sea level, and the Aquarium is roughly only 16 feet above sea level, so Overlook Connector concepts

create a pathway between the two elevations that is accessible and easily traveled. Marshall explained that the designs assume redevelopment of the PC1 site on Pike Place Market property. The concept also assumes ramps and steps with ADA accessible grades, elevated views mimicking the existing views from the Alaskan Way Viaduct, green space, overhead weather protection, space for vendor day stalls, and children's play spaces. Elements may include brick, pier wood and heavy timbers, native landscaping, and urban agriculture.

**Question:** Is your team working with Friends of the Market?

**Response:** Yes, the team is coordinating with the Pike Place Market PDA and Friends of the Market.

## **ELLIOTT BAY SEAWALL PROJECT UPDATE**

Jennifer Wieland, Project Manager for the Elliott Bay Seawall Project, gave an update on the project schedule. On March 26, the team briefed the City Council Special Committee on the Central Waterfront, Seawall, and Alaskan Way Viaduct with the most recent information.

Jennifer reminded the group that the City of Seattle is pursuing a shoreline permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). She explained how the Elliott Bay Seawall Project team has been making progress with the Corps through its regulatory process. A formal pre-application meeting has been completed, and the Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) will soon be submitted. The Corps will determine which environmental track will be used for the federal NEPA process, either an Environmental Assessment (EA), or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This NEPA environmental analysis is not the same as the local (SEPA) analysis that the City of Seattle will complete – that will be an EIS. Jennifer explained that if an EA is selected for federal review, the current schedule may be maintained, however if an EIS is selected, the environmental schedule could be as much as 18-24 months longer than anticipated.

The team has been clear that starting construction in the fall of 2013 is an aggressive schedule. The goal remains to complete the first phase (central seawall between Washington and Virginia) by the time the Alaskan Way Viaduct is demolished. The team is developing strategies to keep the project on track to be complete by early 2016 in the event that permitting delays do not allow construction to begin in 2013. Jennifer said one example being explored is to work from both the north and south ends of the project area simultaneously.

Jennifer also reflected assumptions for the City with regard to construction schedule. The City remains committed to limiting construction periods must avoid businesses' summer seasons (Memorial Day to Labor Day), as well as fish migration seasons (approximately February through September).

The City will continue to coordinate with the Corps to determine the level of environmental analysis required for the federal permit. The team has been invited to brief the District Colonel, which is a positive step for moving forward.

**Question:** How do the Seawall's schedules interact with the construction of the new Alaskan Way?

**Response:** [Answered through next agenda item]

**Question:** Why can't the Viaduct be removed until after the seawall is complete?

**Response:** [Answered through next agenda item]

**Question:** Please explain different ways construction may be phased along the waterfront.

**Response:** We would like to explore that in more detail at a future meeting.

**Question:** Will the Seawall Project be in competition with the recently announced Ballard Locks repair project?

**Response:** No, there is a different budget appropriation and funding mechanisms for these projects.

**Question:** Please describe "construction shutdown" as referenced in the Seawall Project schedule from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

**Response:** The space will be "buttoned up" for the summer. Equipment may be visible, but it will not be active.

**Question:** Is the Colonel the final decision-maker on federal involvement with the Seawall project?

**Response:** The Colonel would have to sign off on this project.

**Question:** What can the stakeholders do to help ensure this project moves forward?

**Response:** The stakeholders have been extremely supportive to date, and the team appreciates you! The upcoming discussion with the Colonel will tell us a lot more about our next steps. This may be an opportunity for the stakeholders and their associations to write short letters to the Corps about this project's importance. Jennifer Wieland will work with individuals to find points of contact if requested.

- ✓ **Action:** Work with individuals to determine best timing if they would like to write letters to the Corps stressing the importance of the Seawall Project.

**Question:** What is your confidence that the Seawall Project will be complete by 2016?

**Response:** The team will be completing a value engineering study and full risk assessment soon, and can speak to our confidence in the schedule when we learn more from the Corps.

**Question:** The first concept of the Seawall Project included a physically shorter project area [Pine vs. Virginia streets]. Would "cutting" the seawall back down to that size save any time, especially with a shorter distance in which to complete jet grouting?

**Response:** The physical length of the construction does not necessarily affect the overall schedule.

## WATERFRONT PROGRAM CONSTRUCTABILITY SEQUENCING

Bob Chandler presented detailed Waterfront Program Constructability Sequencing and referred to a handout with a matrix of "Project Timing." The Elliott Bay Seawall construction and tunnel boring will be ongoing simultaneously from potentially late 2013 through 2015. Bob clarified that there will be a period of transition before the tunnel can be used during which traffic will shift.

During all of this construction, there will be several shifts in traffic on Alaskan Way:

- 1) Today, traffic largely is on Alaskan Way with parking beneath the viaduct.
- 2) Starting in 2013 with seawall construction, all traffic will be beneath the viaduct, with seawall construction and parking in the existing Alaskan Way traffic lanes.
- 3) In 2016, traffic will shift back to the existing Alaskan Way traffic lanes, and viaduct demolition will occur.
- 4) By 2017, construction of utilities and roadway will occur of a new Alaskan Way, essentially in the footprint of the existing viaduct structure.
- 5) After the new roadway is in place, traffic will shift onto the "final" Alaskan Way, at which point promenade construction can be completed.

Bob walked through the detailed sequence of projects on the waterfront, as envisioned today, within the Waterfront Program. He caveated that this timeframe was simply a logic sequence based on space availability for each of the projects, not based on funding availability or a detailed review of environmental permitting required. All projects require the new seawall to be in place to complete. He clarified that some elements, such as the Overlook Connector, might be completed in phases. Other projects could be completed independently of others, as they are separate structures, such as Pier 62/63 and Waterfront Park. These may be "early wins" for the overall program. [A detailed view of all projects is available for reference.]

**Question:** What is an "early win?"

**Response:** Some pieces of Waterfront Seattle projects may be able to be completed ahead of their currently-anticipated schedule, which is considered an "early win." Those projects are typically more independent, and do not rely on other large projects being in place to be completed.

**Question:** What is the schedule for a levy with regard to these projects?

**Response:** The team will present more information about funding measures at the next stakeholder meeting.

✓ **Action:** Present information about a levy to stakeholders at the next meeting.

**Question:** If Phase 1 of the Seawall Project is not complete, what happens as the bored tunnel approaches the area where they are in close proximity?

**Response:** There is one location where the two structures are close in proximity. The south end of seawall construction will be less than 20 feet from the bored tunnel, however this is more to do with using the same space to construct our respective projects. If the Seawall Project has a later start, there is actually more flexibility, as the tunnel machine will be farther away.

**Question:** I understand that work on the Overlook Connector would need to begin before the roadway is complete. Is there any risk of starting this element, and then not being able to finish this work? What if the funding was not available to complete the Connector? **Response:** The City will not begin building major pieces unless they are funded and can be completed.

**Question:** Please communicate in a simple way how the north Seattle community will be able to move to and from downtown. Stakeholders may understand how these pieces come together, but the general public does not.

**Response:** Our teams will be aggressively reaching out to community councils and other neighborhood groups in the coming months. We will also work on simplifying messages for the public.

- ✓ **Action:** Provide simple messages and tools for stakeholders to communicate with their respective associations.

**Question:** What kind of signage will be near the construction site to ensure that those adjacent to construction are protected? Will there be incentives for people to continue visiting the waterfront?

**Response:** The team has more work to complete regarding construction and way-finding. We are open to ideas for signage and way-finding, as well as marketing during construction.

- ✓ **Action:** The teams will present on parking marketing, way-finding and signage at an upcoming meeting, and will seek ongoing points for feedback from the stakeholders group.

**Question:** Bob, as the person in charge of these projects, what keeps you up at night?

**Response:** Areas of concern include tracking tunnel progress, the schedule associated with the Corps and permitting, impacts to businesses, periods of transition between major pieces of work, and budget.

## OTHER WATERFRONT PROJECT UPDATES

Bob Chandler updated the group about construction for the Central Waterfront Transmission Line Relocation Project and the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program. Western Avenue is being reduced to one lane (with two-way traffic) to accommodate Seattle City Light's work, and that configuration will remain until mid April. The work is on schedule to complete the cut over of power to the newly relocated transmission lines in May. Pulling cable and restoration will begin following a major milestone of April 20, 2012 for all vault and duct bank placement.

Alaskan Way will have upcoming traffic changes. Coming in May, a new "switchover" of traffic beneath the viaduct will occur. This accommodates a closure between South Atlantic Street and Yesler Way. It will be in place through early 2014. † During that time, ferry queuing will be moved north of Yesler Way and monitored for effectiveness. This traffic pattern may be in place for up to four years.

In addition, traffic at Yesler will be affected. As of the week of March 26, Seattle Tunnel Partners has been placing micro piles underground to keep the ground stable while the tunnel is bored. Later, the contractor will place secant piles underground. This requires weaving among a variety of utilities at this location. Yesler Way will be closed at its intersection with the Western and Alaskan Way for four to five weeks to accommodate this work. The contractor will maintain access to businesses along Yesler Way, but traffic will be restricted to local access only. Pedestrians will be allowed through the intersection.

**Question:** What is making the area near Yesler so difficult for construction?

**Response:** There are many utilities in that location, which are not always in the exact location that plans indicate. To avoid driving a pile into a utility, the piles must be placed and angled very carefully.

## ONCE-AROUND AND PUBLIC COMMENT

**Nicole McIntosh:** Please continue to coordinate with Washington State Ferries as the construction schedule is developed. Please still consider constructing north to south for the Elliott Bay Seawall Project.

**Kirk Hovenkotter:** Pedestrian way-finding is extremely important during construction. It is confusing to look at a map. Please provide clear information for pedestrians.

**Tom Tanner:** The current detours are working very well.

**Katherine Olson:** How long will the ferry queuing detour last along Yesler Way? Has the Pioneer Square Alliance been informed of this change? Please restripe the faded crosswalks near Yesler Way and the Viaduct. Who will be professionally promoting the Elliott Bay Seawall Project?

**Response:** That ferry queuing configuration may last two years, but will be monitored. The Pioneer Square Alliance has been informed of the plans. There are active Central Waterfront Committee discussions about the promotion of the Seawall Project, so the team will address that topic at a later meeting.

- ✓ **Action:** Take a look at restriping Yesler Way crosswalks.
- ✓ **Action:** Discuss funding and “promotion” of the Seawall Project at an upcoming stakeholders meeting.

**Bob Donegan:** Pass

**Charles Knutson:** Please make sure to tell the stakeholders what we can do to help the process with the Corps move along. I will volunteer to organize letter writing to the Corps.

**Brett Allen:** Pass

**Vlad Oustimovitch:** Is it realistic to think that an Environmental Impact Statement would not be required for the Seawall Project?

**Response:** That is a good clarification for everyone to understand. We do believe that a rigorous review is required. Regardless of the Corps' decision on an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment, the City will complete an EIS for the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process. The decision for the Corps has to do with jurisdiction; the Corps' jurisdiction does not cover the entire project area, rather, only where there is water. The majority of the project's impacts are on the uplands side.

**Steven – King County Metro:** Where will transit be located to access the ferry during construction?

**Response:** Transit is the one entity allowed through the ferry holding site.

**Don Benson:** I would also like to see more outreach to the North Seattle communities about these plans. I am excited to hear of the possibility of an EA with ACOE to speed the process along. Will the project be under a Programmatic Permit from the Corps?

**Response:** No, for this project, the City will be applying for a 404 Permit, which takes us into the environmental process.

**Vince O'Halloran:** Long term, I am concerned that the pedestrian traffic at intersections will interfere with north/south freight travel. I would like to see bicycle/pedestrian overpasses.

**Geri Poor:** Pass

There was no public comment.

## NEXT STEPS AND ACTION ITEMS

Erin Taylor summarized the action items captured during the meeting:

- ✓ Summaries from the seventh and eighth Central Waterfront Stakeholders Group meetings will be provided as soon as possible, aiming for within one week.
- ✓ Individuals may contact the team for help if they choose to write letters to the Corps stressing the importance of the Seawall Project.
- ✓ The teams will present on project funding at an upcoming meeting.
- ✓ Stakeholders request tools for communicating with their respective associations.
- ✓ The teams will present on parking marketing, way-finding and signage at an upcoming meeting.
- ✓ Crosswalks should be repainted near Yesler Way in Pioneer Square.
- ✓ Discuss funding and "promotion" of the Seawall Project at an upcoming stakeholders meeting.

The ninth Central Waterfront Stakeholders Group meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 10, 2012 at City Hall's Bertha Knight Landes Room.